
Personality and Self: Multiple Frames of Reference for Career Service Professionals

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Introduction

Those who, in one or the other professional capacity, work towards promoting career development of individuals can be termed career service professionals. Career services, a heterogeneous field, attracts, and benefits from the committed participation of professionals from psychology, sociology, education, public policy, development studies, and other disciplines. Regardless of their educational origins, those who work in the area of career services have in common—the person. In whichever role a career service professional is engaged (e.g., debating or formulating career guidance policy, providing individual career counseling, supporting a person on a career helpline, conducting a career-related workshop for parents of youth)—the person remains central.

We are living in times characterized by startlingly high levels of change (e.g., Global Trends 2030, 2012; Kotler & Caslione, 2009). Prominent features include raised or lowered expectations, aspirations, and quality of life; urbanization and globalization; physical and/or virtual migration of people and jobs; generational shifts in occupations; changing occupational structure and related educational/competence requirements;

instability and uncertainty in the local, national, and global labor markets and economies; shifting balance of power amongst nations; altered demographic trends and workforce composition; factionalism or separatism and conflict/violence; accelerated advancements in knowledge and technology; and, increasing experience of cultural diversity. Our societies are in flux; occupations and careers are in flux. Who is the person, amidst all of this? How oriented is the person to change? How oriented can the person be to positive development?

It is time to *revisit* key dialogues about the person in the Western literature. Given the increasing interface between cultures and the call for indigenization of psychology (or more generally knowledge) (Leong & Pearce, 2011; Yang, 2012), it is the most pressing time to *visit* key dialogues about the person in the Eastern literature. Accordingly, this chapter presents an overview of key dialogues with regard to (a) personality in Western psychology, (b) self in Western psychology, and (c) personality and self in Indian literature drawn from philosophy and spirituality. In each case, the intention is to represent indigenous perspectives. Therefore, although of value, cross-cultural psychological perspectives (i.e., Western psychologists' efforts to test and extend Western theories in other cultures) are not included. Instead, for this chapter, I have chosen Western psychological perspectives on personality and self, drawn from research and theory in the West, because these amount to indigenous

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Western psychology. Likewise, it is indigenous Eastern thought about the person that I have chosen to represent, regardless of whether this forces me to use philosophical rather than scientific psychology.

My aim is to present the multiple frames of reference, both within indigenous Western psychology, and also vis-à-vis indigenous Eastern thought. Confronting these varying frames of reference may help dislodge complacency (if any) about beliefs relating to the personality and the self. No special effort at all is made to include career-related literature: This is because my premise is that each career professional has to be oriented to the *person* whose career development is to be supported, and thereby it is important for each career professional to bring to mind what his or her beliefs are about the person. This chapter will assist career professionals to clarify and possibly widen their perspectives about the person.

Reflections across the multiple frames of reference pivot around the articulation of an orientation to change in describing the person. In later sections of the chapter, conclusions are made for career service professionals and new directions for the field are indicated. The methodological style is qualitative; therefore, insofar as possible, a theorist's words are illustrated verbatim.

Personality in Indigenous Western Psychology

In Western Psychology, the study of the personality has attracted extensive effort. The literature generated is vast, characterized with ample variability. Rather than a clear overriding consensus, there are larger or smaller pockets of consensus. Some of this varied literature has been *sampled* in this section. A comprehensive coverage of the literature is beyond both the aim and scope of the chapter. Given the aim of presenting multiple frames of reference, it is the key contradictions, oppositions, and agreements with regard to the personality in indigenous Western Psychology that have been illustrated. Also in line with this aim, points for reflection

have been drawn keeping in mind Eastern perspectives.

Five Different Personality Paradigms

Wiggins (2003) has identified five different paradigms, each of which, he stated, has provided its own answer to “what is the personality?” and to the “what and how of personality assessment.” These include the psychodynamic (Freud—focus: drives), the interpersonal (Sullivan—focus: interpersonal relations), the personological (Murray—focus: life history), the multivariate (Cattell—focus: structure of traits), and the empirical (Hathaway—focus: psychiatric diagnosis) (Wiggins, 2003). Further, he has described each of these paradigms as explained in this subsection.

The Psychodynamic Paradigm

For Freud, the founding theorist of the psychodynamic paradigm, personality was the outcome of the intrapsychic conflict between unconscious drives and societal restrictions, expressed through the interplay of the id, ego, and superego. Adult personality was founded on early experiences, with psychological processes displaying “a relatively slow rate of change” and “permanence of organization and function” (Rapaport as cited in Wiggins, 2003, p. 29). Later developments in this paradigm include ego psychology and object relations theory (e.g., attachment theory); for example, Bowlby's concept of “internal working models” (i.e., unconscious representations of self and others based on interactions in the early years). Personality types in this paradigm represent what has gone *wrong*: Examples in classical psychoanalysis include Freud's description of an “anal character,” Reich's description of “passive–feminine,” “paranoid–aggressive,” etc.; in ego psychology, Shapiro's description of obsessive-compulsive, hysterical, paranoid styles, etc. Traditionally, projective tests have been used to measure personality in the psychodynamic paradigm (e.g., the various versions of the Rorschach Inkblot Test, the Thematic Apperception Test [TAT]).

The Interpersonal Paradigm

Instead of viewing *an individual* (and his/her personality), Sullivan was struck by the matrix of (innumerable) interrelationships *between individuals*; accordingly, we become who we are only through interpersonal processes. Thus for Sullivan, the personality grew out of (culturally embedded) interpersonal processes and was visible in repeated patterns in relating to others. “Interpersonal force fields” is an illustrative term in this paradigm used by Sullivan and others; for example, Kiesler (1996) talked of a force field emanating from each person which impels others to react in complementary ways, resulting in the validation of the person’s notions of who-I-am: “In the process of emitting distinctive ‘force fields’ we attempt to influence others into reactions that confirm our definition of self and others” (p. 5). The interpersonal paradigm has been operationalized using circumplex models with two chief antipodes: one to do with control (or instrumentality, agency), and the other with affiliation (or nurturance, communion), together yielding eight (or 16) dimensions. Each of these eight dimensions is graphically depicted as one sector of a circle (i.e., an octant). Wiggins’s Interpersonal Adjective Scales (IAS) is an example of a test developed using the circumplex model; examples of octants are assured-dominant which is next to arrogant-calculating but diametrically opposite to unassured-submissive. A person’s personality profile is assessed vis-à-vis the extent of ascendancy of each octant; typology is determined through the most elevated octant. Thus, a person can be a “warm-agreeable” type.

The Personological Paradigm

Case studies, life histories, and psychobiographies typical of the personological paradigm have yielded quite varied conclusions about the personality. For instance, Allport and his associates remarked on the “extraordinary continuity and sameness in the individual personality” (as cited in Wiggins, 2003, p. 96). On the other hand, Erikson (1963) was convinced of notable transformations in the personality right through the life span, with strengths (e.g., trust, initiative,

intimacy, integrity) and virtues (e.g., hope, purpose, love, wisdom) gained with positive development at each stage. Using Erikson’s theory as a backdrop, McAdams (1993, 2006) shifted attention to self-constructions: Through the life span (especially from adolescence onward), each of us is creating and refining/refashioning a mythic life story which interweaves what we remember of our past, perceive of our present, and expect of our future; culture provides the menu of plots and themes for these “self-defining life narratives.” His interview methods entailed asking the person to imagine their life as a story in a book, with each chapter being a part of their life, creating a table of contents, identifying key events and people, the overall life theme, etc.

The Multivariate Paradigm

In the multivariate paradigm, the personality is viewed as a person’s relative standing on various traits capturing individual differences which are “moderately heritable” and “relatively stable over the adult life span” (Wiggins, 2003, p. 10). Adjectives (e.g., organized, worrying, outgoing) are garbed as traits as they are assumed to reflect a lexical source of personality attributes; families of traits have been identified through factor analysis of self-ratings on adjectives. Thus, this paradigm is founded on a two-step tradition in personality theory and research: lexical (yielding *surface* traits) followed by structural (yielding *source* traits or higher-order traits). The Big Five model or the Five-Factor Model (FFM) has emerged from such lexical and statistical efforts and its popularity in personality psychology is well established. The five families of traits or five factors (i.e., higher-order traits) are: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (e.g., McCrae & Costa, 1987). An individual’s personality (i.e., relative position on each of the five factors) is typically measured using a self-report personality inventory such as the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R Form S) (Costa & McCrae, 2008).

The Empirical Paradigm

In the empirical paradigm, the focus is on identifying personality abnormalities, and the

Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (i.e., the MMPI and its revisions—the MMPI-2 for adults and the MMPI-A for adolescents) has been the principal measurement aid. In fact, Wiggins has called this paradigm *empirical* not because it is the only paradigm based on substantial research but rather to acknowledge that the MMPI has “the *largest* empirical literature associated with any existing personality test” (Wiggins, 2003, p. 179; emphasis added). The 567 self-reported but clinically administered true-false items cohere into an impressive range of scales and subscales (see the product description of the MMPI-2 at <http://psychcorp.pearsonassessments.com>): The MMPI-2 has 8 Validity Scales, 10 Clinical Scales (e.g., Depression [D], Psychopathic Deviate [Pd]) along with many Clinical Subscales (e.g., Familial Discord [Pd1]), 15 Content Scales (e.g., Type A [TPA], Low Self-Esteem [LSE], Work Interference [WRK]), 27 Component Content Scales (e.g., Competitive Drive [TPA2]), and numerous Supplementary Scales. Currently the MMPI-2 has ample versatility. Not only does it allow (clinical) typological categorization of personality using the scales on which a person’s scores are most elevated but it also measures continuously distributed individual differences on trait dimensions.

Notion of Trait, Role of Consistency, and Other Key Dialogues

Notwithstanding Wiggins’s discerning and fairly comprehensive work in identifying and portraying five personality paradigms, there are key dialogues in the study of personality in indigenous Western Psychology that warrant inclusion. In relation to these dialogues the following set of questions is relevant:

- To what extent does the notion of a trait rest on consistency or stability?
- What are the *limits* of this consistency? Alternatively, how *far-reaching* is this consistency?
- In other words, how *flexible* are traits across time, across situations? Alternatively, how

pervasive are traits across time, across situations?

- Where does a trait come from, where can it go if at all?
- If traits are modifiable, what is the explanation for this modifiability?
- Until when are traits in their formative state, and when do they become “set-for-life” or at least resistant to change?

In order to be tenable, the construct of personality requires more than a modicum of stability. If there were no (relatively) typical ways in which a person’s behaviors were distinguishable from another’s, we could not talk of a personality. Nonetheless, such stability could still be within bounds for adaptive purposes. Therefore, these questions enable reflection over the degree of adaptiveness of the personality as construed in the indigenous Western literature. Given the increasing need for adaptability and flexibility in career development, undoubtedly these questions are particularly salient for career service professionals.

Gordon W. Allport’s Position

Allport’s overriding conclusions were in clear favor of traits as consistent, as stable. For instance, note his conclusion on the sameness of personality cited in the previous subsection. This, of course, does not mean that he conferred robotic rigidity to trait expressions in human beings. Zuroff (1986) has highlighted the different ways in which Allport admitted to variability in expression of traits (albeit limitedly in my view): (a) Cross-situational inconsistency as error variance: A person may be inconsistent across situations because of a temporary psychological state, a temporary change in a setting, or in order to defensively dissemble underlying traits. (b) Cross-situational inconsistency as researcher error: This is when the researcher has misidentified behavior as reflecting a comprehensive trait when instead the behavior is explained by two separate specific traits. The example given is about a child who steals but does not lie; instead of a trait of honesty which would mean that the child was inconsistent, Allport has claimed that the behavior is explained

by two specific traits (one to do with stealing, the other with mendacity). (c) Coexistence of contradictory traits: “Conquering and yielding, extraverted and introverted, saintly and sinful dispositions may reside within one breast” (Allport as cited in Zuroff, 1986, p. 994). Allport illustrated how a person could be submissive towards those with authority or high prestige and be dictatorial and offensive with all others; how a teacher was careful with own possessions and not so with others’ possessions. He concluded that “traits are often aroused in one type of situation and not in another; not all stimuli are equivalent in effectiveness” (as cited in Zuroff, 1986, p. 994).

Allport’s first two depictions of cross-situational inconsistencies are actually arguments in favor of consistency (Zuroff, 1986). Zuroff considered the third explanation to be an acknowledgment of authentic cross-situational variability. Further, he felt that this explanation clarified the extent of cross-situational consistency or stability of personality traits: not pervasive (i.e., across all situations) but limited to the same type of situations.

My view is more moderate. I would say that the third explanation is more accepting of cross-situational differences in a person’s behavior. Yes, it does set some limits to the pervasiveness of trait *expressions*. Largely because Allport, it appears, had conceded to a trait-situation fit. Nevertheless, this explanation falls short with regard to the possibility of modifiability of traits. For the underlying traits remain the same; which ones are provoked or elicited at which point depends upon the qualities of the situation or the context. That is, it is the (external) expression of traits that may change from one type of context to another but the (internal) trait structure remains the same. Therefore, the focus on sameness remains somewhat formidable: congruent behaviors across the same types of contexts, and an unchanging internal structure. To add to this, Allport differentiated between cardinal, central, and specific traits; some people he claimed possessed an all-pervasive cardinal trait, although most possessed central and specific traits with reduced generality (Zuroff, 1986).

Allport represents the *realist* position in personality psychology (Caspi & Shiner, 2006; Zuroff, 1986). This position is also called the *explanatory* position (Caspi & Shiner, 2006) because for Allport traits were causal entities, his “analysis of the causes of behavior relied entirely on the trait concept” (Zuroff, 1986, p. 995). Thus Allport fenced himself within the limits of more or less direct causation (internal structure to behavior) without seeing the benefits of a process theory; his only concessions in this regard were his recognition that situations could “arouse” particular traits, and that people selected the very situations in which they could freely express their traits (e.g., a garrulous person will look out for and create situations in which he/she can talk fairly uninterruptedly) (Zuroff, 1986).¹

Zuroff has attempted but failed to recast Allport as a clear interactionist or process theorist. Amongst other things, this would also have required Allport to grant formative or transformational power to the environment. In striking contrast, Allport was a continuity theorist, unconvinced that the environment could alter the personality (Zuroff, 1986).

Walter Mischel’s Position

Allportian notions have most commonly been pitted against those of Walter Mischel. Mischel’s 1968 monograph was misunderstood as venerating the situation over the person and decrying the need to study personality (Mischel, 2004). Regardless of seemingly disparate positions at earlier points (see Zuroff, 1986), Mischel’s current position is congruent with Allport’s in a *few* respects. One meeting point between them is Mischel’s conviction (as well) that the personality is invariant, in spite of evidence of cross-situational inconsistency (see Mischel, 2004). How has Mischel resolved the paradox of an invariant personality generating

¹ The latter is compatible with literature on active gene-environment correlations (e.g., Plomin, DeFries, & Loehlin, 1977). This idea is also part of Mischel’s theory (cf. Mischel & Shoda, 1995).

cross-situational inconsistency? The first part of the answer to the “personality paradox” (Mischel, 2004) brings us (as Zuroff [1986] precociously noted), to the second meeting point between Allport and Mischel: the idea that the consistency is to be located in the same types of situations (i.e., situations which are functionally equivalent for the individual). Compatible with Allport’s third explanation of cross-situational variability, is Mischel’s observation that: “(B)ehaviors are stable within each type of situation but varied from one type to another. . . A person may be less agreeable than others in one type of situation, but more agreeable than others in another type” (Mischel, 2004, p. 6) or (depending on the type of situation) “both hurtful and kind, caring and uncaring, violent and gentle” (Mischel & Shoda, 1995, p. 258).

Unlike Allport who did not explicate the processes through which the functional equivalence of a subset of situations could be established (Zuroff, 1986), Mischel has centered his theory and research on the processes that explain “invariance—in the variability” (Mischel, 2004, p. 2). Neither a realist nor supportive of the structural approach, his stand is that personality psychology need not only refer to “the study of differences between individuals in their global trait descriptions on trait adjective ratings” (i.e., the lexical and structural approaches); instead it can also pertain to “the study of the distinctiveness and stability that characterize the individual’s social cognitive and emotional processes as they play out in the social world” (Mischel, 2004, p. 5). His work is mainly classified as a *process* approach. The term “processing structures” (Mischel & Shoda, 1995) is preferred over traits in his theory—a temperate position which stands in sharp contrast to the Allportian construal of traits as inherent, real-yet-inferred causal entities.

Keeping in mind the cognitive paradigm in psychology, he has accorded the person with meaning-making and discriminative judgment in regard to situations and corresponding response tendencies. At the same time, he has contended that there are repeated patterns in such sense-making and response tendencies, which he

has termed *behavioral signatures*. A behavioral signature of personality can also be defined as a unique pattern of *if-then* relationships that explain a person’s psychological invariance despite variability (“if” = psychological aspects of a situation; “then” = the cognitions and affects that are activated by these psychological features) (Mischel, 2004; Mischel, Shoda, & Mendoza-Denton, 2002). Therefore, for the same type of situations, there is temporal stability even though concurrent consistency across different types of situations may remain low. Methodologically he has preferred to use in vivo observations to identify *stable patterns* of intrapersonal behavioral variability in personality research as opposed to using lexically sourced ratings or aggregated conclusions across observed situations.

As an illustration, Mischel and Shoda (1995) have developed a model: the Cognitive-Affective Processing System (CAPS). This model integrates a systems view, theory/research from the cognitive paradigm, and the study of social and emotional competence; it also appears allied to attachment theory (e.g., Bowlby) and action perspectives. In this model, the personality system holds mental representations in the form of varied cognitive-affective units (CAUs). These CAUs are “the person’s construal and representations of the self, people, and situations, enduring goals, expectations-beliefs, and feeling states, as well as memories of people and past events” (Mischel, 2004, p. 11); they reflect the person’s genetic endowment, biological history, culture/subculture, and social learning history (Mischel et al., 2002, p. 53). True to a system, the CAUs are interconnected and mutually influential. However, the extent of influence and accessibility of CAUs may vary. Thus, there can be individual differences in the content/quality of CAUs, their interconnections, and their accessibility. CAUs mediate situation–behavior relationships (through conscious and unconscious processes). CAUs explain the manner in which “individuals interact with, select, and change their personal social world” (Mischel & Shoda, 1995, p. 259). The central premise is that the CAUs are differentially yet characteristically activated in various

situations, resulting in a behavioral signature. This behavioral signature, the original identifier of the personality, is given flesh and bone only through patterned relationships between CAUs and situations. Consider their example of two boys with the same (aggregated) overall level of aggression: one was more aggressive than other children when the situation involved an adult, and less aggressive when it involved a peer; the reverse was the case with the second boy. Despite the same overall level of a behavioral disposition, there was a different pattern in their cross-situational variability—their behavioral signatures were unique.

The CAPS model also potentially yields personality types based on similarity in the personality system; for example, if people share the same kind of CAUs and their inter-coordinations, and hence have the same if-then pattern such as the rejection-sensitivity type (Mischel, 2004; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). A person who is the rejection-sensitive type, for instance, may interpret an otherwise innocuous behavior of a friend turning away to talk to another as a deliberate attempt to insult and may express inappropriate anger that may well lead to rejection. A particularly ingenuous feature of this theory is the postulation that like the CAPS which distinguishes a person, there can be a CAPS which distinguishes a dyad (e.g., a married couple).

Although the use of the verb “activate” (or trigger) in if-then relationships appears to denote a mechanical or at best a chemical reactive mode, Mischel (2004) has not foreclosed other avenues of *action* (see for example, Brandtstädter, 2006). If a person is credited with meaning-making and discriminative judgment, it follows that the person need not only use these to perpetuate patterns of response tendencies in relation to particular types of situations. It also awards agency such that a person could use revised judgment to refashion meanings and affects and alter past patterns or behavioral signatures. And here is where there is a definite breach in the theories of Allport and Mischel. Mischel and Shoda’s CAPS model lends coherence and continuity to the personality but not as a closed system impervious to change: “the cognitive-affective system

theory of personality assumes that the organization of relations within the person’s mediating network, the structure of the personality system, remains relatively stable and invariant across situations *unless* new learning, development, or biochemical changes occur” (Mischel & Shoda, 1995, p. 256; emphasis added). Despite the oft-repeated claim of an invariant personality, Mischel allows human agency and its corollary: that is, modifiability of the personality system (see Mischel, 2004). In line with action perspectives (i.e., intentional self-development), he recognizes the principal role of self-regulation in accounting for either possibility in (personality) development—continuity *or change*. In Allport’s theory, the constituents of the personality have always been set-for-life; in contrast, in Mischel and Shoda’s model, the personality remains an open system throughout (although genes and early experiences are given temporal priority). The dynamic personality system in Mischel and Shoda’s model can well be maintained as stable but holds possibilities for positive change. “That also increases the hope that ultimately people do not have to be the victims of either their predispositions or their biographies” (Mischel, 2004, p. 18).

Additional Examples

In portraying additional examples of agreements and disagreements in the personality literature in Western Psychology, I have included the work of Block (e.g., 2002), Caspi and Shiner (2006), Mroczek (e.g., Mroczek, Spiro, & Almeida, 2003), and Holland (1959, 1997).

Block

From 1968, resistance to Mischelian ideas has been evident in personality psychology, particularly illustrated by the person–situation debate that had ensued in personality psychology (cf. Mischel, 2004). Over 40 years later, a sizable group of personality psychologists continue to oppose newer Mischelian ideas. Block (2002), for example, disparaged the CAPS model as underdeveloped (e.g., the CAUs are broadly rather than specifically explicated), overly ideographic, and focused on idiosyncrasies.

Block (e.g., 2002) proposed a nomothetic process theory, distinguishable in his view from structural approaches such as those of Costa and McCrae which he considered essentially atheoretical (i.e., lacking a deductive system), and from ideographic process approaches (i.e., Mischel and Schoda's CAPS model²). His theory is exclusively focused on one (albeit important) self-regulative function: optimizing the balance between overcontrol and undercontrol (i.e., context-sensitive "adaptive modulation"). The foundational notion is that "the human goal is to be as undercontrolled as possible and as overcontrolled as necessary" (Block & Kremen, 1996, p. 351). In an interesting parallel to CAUs, Block's personality system includes interrelated "ego-functioning structures" which are mental representations (or relational rules, scripts). These are involved in self-regulation of impulse, and (ideally) entail assessing the context to judge whether delay of gratification or spontaneity is justified, whether it is best to exercise caution or to be playful. Self-regulation of impulse is also useful for holding aggression in check. The developmental progression is from undercontrol to overcontrol and lastly to optimization of control (i.e., "resilience" or ego-resiliency), credited not to genes but to Freudian (e.g., reality principle) and ego-psychological explanations (e.g., internal working model). Not everyone makes it to the third step; therefore, Block's typology contrasts ego-resilients with ego-brittles (Block & Kremen, 1996). Ego-brittles are either "more undercontrolled than is adaptively effective" (i.e., undercontrollers) or "more overcontrolled than is adaptively required" (overcontrollers) (Block & Kremen, 1996, p. 351; Caspi & Shiner, 2006). Moreover by adulthood, ego-resiliency or ego-brittleness becomes a relatively enduring characterological quality of the person.

Caspi and Shiner

Caspi and Shiner (2006) represent the neo-Allportian position which is favored by many personality psychologists. Continuing in the Allportian tradition, they consider traits as real entities located in an internal structure which cause and thereby explain stable individual differences (i.e., the realist or explanatory position in personality psychology). The Big Five provides the taxonomy of individual differences in personality in adulthood; they cite evidence of its utility in mapping individual differences in personality during childhood and adolescence as well.

In response to the criticism that "(t)rait models are often caricatured as static, nondevelopmental conceptions of personality" (Caspi & Shiner, 2006, p. 302), they offer multiple unidirectional hypotheses and supporting research findings. They start by couching personality traits as organizational constructs which impact the manner in which a person organizes behavior in relation to environmental or developmental challenges. They select the word "elaboration" (of available structure) to capture developmental processes. Six processes are listed through which the early temperament/personality ("part of each individual's genetic heritage" [p. 326]) *shapes* later personality,³ or is *elaborated* into later personality: learning processes, environmental elicitation, environmental construal, social/temporal comparisons and self-construal, environmental selection, and, environmental manipulation (p. 326). They illustrate these processes clearly: a child high on openness may engage in complex and challenging learning tasks (learning processes); a child high on extraversion may convincingly push others into accepting him/her as the group leader (environmental manipulation). They also posit the personality as a unidirectional influence on multiple developmental domains as follows: (a) how personality *shapes*

² Block (2002) was also in disagreement with Mischel's (e.g., 2004) stance on the "cooling" benefits of delayed gratification. Block who lauded contextually-relevant undercontrol, was opposed to a unidimensional view of impulse modulation.

³ Also compatible with the evocative/reactive and active gene-environment correlation model (e.g., Plomin et al., 1977).

relationships, (b) how personality *shapes* school and work performance, and (c) how personality *shapes* health, including risk or resilience with regard to psychopathology. All developmental processes elucidated are to do with strengthening and widening of the influence of personality. Further, Caspi and Shiner (2006) have (conspicuously) omitted Glen Elder's (e.g., Elder & Shanahan, 2006) work on turning points, included in an earlier writing (i.e., in Caspi, 1998), and thus appear to have ruled out the possibility of qualitative transformation of the personality.

Mroczek

Overall, Mroczek's work promotes a more open understanding of personality stability and change, especially across adulthood. In adopting an explicitly developmental view, he is helping to loosen the rather deeply established notions in Western thought about the (relative) invariance of the personality. Mroczek et al. (2003), for example, have identified multiple types of differences with regard to the personality: (a) between-person variability (e.g., individual differences in typical levels of neuroticism); (b) within-person change over time (i.e., trends in the personality trajectory over time such as an overall increase or decrease in extraversion); and (c) within-person fluctuation or variation in response to situations or to daily rhythms (i.e., differences in neuroticism during a project presentation at work versus a lower-stress time, differences in neuroticism in the morning versus evening). Mroczek and Spiro (2003) have argued in favor of yet another type of difference: Between-person variability in within-person change over time. Thus, they state that it is not a question of personality "stability versus change" (p. 153); that is, one does not have to select one position, that of stability or that of change. The personality can be stable over time or change over time; both occur but across different individuals. The "concept of interindividual differences in intraindividual change" (p. 153) indicates that people differ in whether they change or remain stable.

Holland

In the career literature, Holland's theory of vocational personalities and work environments has made a definite mark (Leung, 2008). Based on extensive research in the United States, Holland (1959, 1997) has formulated a typology of vocational personalities, namely *Realistic*, *Investigative*, *Artistic*, *Social*, *Enterprising*, and *Conventional* (RIASEC). A person's vocational personality type (e.g., artistic) or subtype (i.e., the three most ascendant types represented in the person's profile such as RIC) reflects suitability and affinity for congruent kinds of work and work environments. By the end of adolescence, a relatively stable vocational personality is formed and it is expected, for example, that an artistic person's vocational satisfaction and competence will be higher when the work environment is artistic.

Conclusion and Reflections

In personality psychology, Block (2002) wryly observed, "rather different cartographies of the field have been offered up as guides to the terrain" and "the place-names or routes accorded by one mapmaker arouse anathema in other assayers." He added that "it also has become increasingly clear that large congruencies exist, or seem to exist" (p. xi). It is these multiple frames of reference (along with some overlaps) that I have attempted to illustrate in this section. The personality literature, of course, extends well beyond the samples presented here.

There are many points of reflection that can be raised using the personality literature in this section. These points can allow a career service professional to examine his or her own orientation to the *person*.

A Moot Point About Traits and Their Modifiability

Is the trait an entity? Is it an underlying structure that a person possesses? Does a person possess fixed quantities of various qualities? Do these qualities unidirectionally influence various

developmental outcomes? It is unclear how the Allportian or neo-Allportian position can be reconciled with notions of development otherwise in Western Psychology (cf. Gottlieb, Wahlsten, & Lickliter, 2006; Thelen & Smith, 2006) of (for example) probabilistic rather than deterministic influences, feed-forward and feed-backward coactions (multidirectionality of influences), and experience-dependent plasticity. It is one thing to say that something is quite stable or rather can be quite stable (and specify the conditions under which stability is actively maintained in a dynamic system); it is another thing to exclude the possibility of modifiability. That is tantamount to denying hope (cf. Mischel, 2004) and declaring the irredeemable inequality of individuals.

A related point for reflection is whether the worthiness of a phenomenon depends upon its continued presence. If we include plasticity (i.e., modifiability or mutability) does the phenomenon become weak or less worthy? Perhaps, the reverse is the case. Note Lerner's (2006) statement that "the potential for plasticity at both individual and contextual levels constitutes a fundamental strength of all human development" (p. 3). Perhaps, as Mroczek and Spiro (2003) have noted, "It is time for our notions of personality stability to change" (p. 163).

What Is the Goal of Personality Development?

In some perspectives or positions, there is no explication of a goal in personality development. This is not surprising because goals require movement. Only a theorist who is ready to allow change or some progression towards a desired point will include goals.

A person may have a particular personality structure, mapped using the Big Five. Perhaps the person is low on conscientiousness. We know from research that the trait conscientiousness is helpful for success in one's career (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991), but what of it? How does this research finding benefit those who are low on conscientiousness? Such research is taxonomically useful for researchers but a dead-end for individuals if movement towards higher levels

of conscientiousness is precluded. On the other hand, once again note Lerner's (2006) impelling orientation: "The potential for and instantiations of plasticity legitimate an optimistic and proactive search for characteristics of individuals and of their ecologies that, together, can be arrayed to promote positive human development across life" (p. 3).

Block's (2002) theory identifies an optimum goal (although by adulthood movement becomes restricted). Whenever personality theorists are simultaneously psychotherapists, movement towards optimum points (wellbeing) is always predicated (e.g., Freud, 2002; Kiesler, 1996). Mischel (2004) has also allowed the possibility of movement towards more adaptive states.

Other interrelated reflective points are to do with agency, the roles ascribed to the person, and those to the context.

Self in Indigenous Western Psychology

In reviewing their orientation to the *person* (whose career development is to be supported), career service professionals need to also (re) examine the substantial body of literature on the self. Overall, self theorists do not quite see eye-to-eye with personality theorists. However, there are also some crossovers or overlaps: that is, personality theorists whose suppositions include self-construals. The work of these scholars will be discussed first, followed by the legacy positions of William James and Charles Cooley, and offshoots such as Susan Harter's (2006) contemporary theory and Hubert Hermans' (e.g., 2001) dialogical self theory.

Overlaps: Personality and Self

Examples of personality scholars (cited in the previous section) whose work includes self-construals are McAdams (1993), Kiesler (1996), and Mischel (e.g., 2004). Let us consider Kiesler's work. He has described the conjoint transaction between persons each of whom uses

a “who-I-am template” or a self-schema and self-other schema (credited to genes and childhood experiences); these schemas produce selective patterns of attention, recall, participation, and reaction. Self-fulfilling prophecy and interpersonal complementarity are key constructs in his theory. Interactants use their self- and self-other schemas conjointly to express complementary reactions that confirm and preserve their respective self-schemas. At the same time, such transactional patterns need not remain intractable. Human fulfillment requires that we transcend stubborn and automatic reactions, and experience moments with others in which we conjointly create unscripted and reciprocally joyful outcomes: possible, for example, through contemporary interpersonal psychotherapy (Kiesler, 1996, p. x).

William James’s Theory

Hierarchy and Multiplicity of the “Me Self”

William James (1890/2007) saw the self as clearly multidimensional. A multi-tiered aggregate constitutes the “empirical self” (observed/experienced self) commonly understood as “me” or the “me self.” The bottom tier of the “me” he identified as the “material self,” the next tier as the “social self,” and third as the “spiritual self”: an arrangement also, one may say, from concrete to abstract. He posited multiplicity within the tiers as well. Thus the material self includes identifications first with the body, next with clothes (more generally, adornment), the home, products of our labor, possessions, and other material wealth. The material self may be aggrandized through satisfaction of bodily appetites, acquisitiveness, etc.; self-evaluation of the material self may result, for example, in vanity (or modesty) with regard to one’s appearance, and pride with regard to one’s possessions (or fear of privation).

“(A) man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind” (James, 1890/2007, p. 294). For practical purposes, however, he reduced this to “as many different social selves

as there are distinct *groups* of persons about whose opinion he cares”; moreover, a person, by and large, “shows a different side of himself to each of these different groups” (p. 294). Individuals differ in how harmoniously their multiple social selves coexist. The social selves are aggrandized through sociability, ambition, and love; self-evaluation of the social selves, for example, may result in pride (or humility) with regard to one’s family or social achievements.

The word “spiritual” in relation to the spiritual self is to be understood broadly rather than narrowly. More generally the spiritual self refers to self-identification with thought; more specifically it refers to self-definitions based on our intellectual faculties, moral sensitivities, or religious orientations. These “psychic dispositions” are a far greater source of fulfillment than the constituents of the lower-tiered selves such as material possessions. They “are the most enduring and intimate part of the self, that which we most verily seem to be” (p. 296). The spiritual self can be aggrandized through heeding one’s conscience, through intellectual or moral aspirations; self-evaluation of the spiritual self may result, for example, in a sense of moral superiority (or inferiority).

Selectiveness, Salience, and Self-Esteem

There are multiple possible selves, “(b)ut to make any one of them actual, the rest must more or less be suppressed” and having picked out one, “(a)ll other selves thereupon become unreal”: this is a cogent example of the “selective industry of the mind” (James, 1890/2007, p. 310). Successes and failures of the chosen self are experienced as real and are accompanied with strong emotions (e.g., joy or shame); the person, conversely, is not concerned about failure or inadequacy in relation to other (i.e., discarded) possible selves. Our evaluative self-feeling is largely contingent on our selection of what to be and do. Therefore, “Self-esteem = Success/Pretensions”; logically, “(s)uch a fraction may be increased as well by diminishing the denominator as by increasing the numerator” (pp. 310–311). Each

addition of what one wants to be or do is both a potential source of esteem as also a burden. James saw the person as the agent of these additions and subtractions, and concluded that self-esteem was in our power. (At another point, he also recognized the influence of another on the self-feeling associated with a social self.)

The “I-Self” as the Creator of the “Me-Selves”

Where does this aggregate or collective comprising the “me” come from? The answer to this question brings us to the “I-me” distinction. “I” is the knower, the observer, the evaluator (i.e., thought rather than a soul); “me” is the known, the observed, and the evaluated. James has also called the “I” the owner of the me-collective or the thinker that construes and coordinates the collective of me-selves.

What About Continuity of the Self?

“I” (constituted of thoughts) is the “proprietor” of the selves; the “I” renders continuity and sameness by linking to the present, selected features of the past. The “I” observes, remembers, judges, identifies, collects, owns, or appropriates some of the past, disowns other past, and creates a unity. The vantage point is the present feeling, “(w)hatever remembered-past-feelings *resemble* this present feeling are deemed to belong to the same *me* with it” (James, 1890/2007, p. 400). Each new thought becomes the fresh past with its appropriated history of thoughts and is selectively appropriated into the next thought. At the same time, James asserted that “this generic unity coexists with generic differences just as real as the unity” (p. 335).

Charles H. Cooley’s Theory

James’s influence on Cooley is readily evident as some of Cooley’s (1902) key ideas are extensions of James (1890/2007); however, Cooley’s emphasis, principal orientation, and conclusions are original.

Emphasis on the Social Self

The I-me distinction and the three-tiered hierarchy of me-selves are missing from Cooley’s theory. For Cooley (1902) the empirical or observed self was social. He did not believe that there existed a self that was not social; accordingly, his theory centers around the social self.

The self is essentially social because it is appropriative of physical (e.g., toys in childhood, house in adulthood), social (e.g., relationships), and mental (e.g., ideas, opinions) objects as “my/mine” and distinct from those of others. Without these others, there would be no need for appropriation, no need for distinguishing and asserting what was mine or not (whether a theory, a friend, or a cell phone), and therefore no basis or need for defining the self. To put it simply, there is no self, if there is no other. It is in this regard that Cooley (1902) called the “I” a “militant social tendency, working to hold and enlarge its place” (p. 149) in a world shared with other persons.

“I,” “my/mine,” and appropriation begin in the early years (credited to observation and a hereditary instinct) and are accompanied with an “emotional animus.” Self-assertion however, is balanced by impressibility, framed as the looking-glass self.

The Social Self as the Looking-Glass Self

The looking-glass self is an extension of James’s observation that we apprehend and are susceptible to the “images of me in the minds of other men” (James, 1890/2007, p. 321). Like we look into a mirror and see ourselves and judge ourselves depending on what we would like to see, “so in imagination we perceive in another’s mind some thought of our appearance, manners, aims, deeds, character, friends, and so on, and are variously affected by it” (Cooley, 1902, p. 152). The self is therefore composed of three chief aspects: (a) how we imagine we appear to the other person, (b) how we imagine the person judges how (we think) we appear to him/her, and (c) the affect that accompanies our imagination of that person’s judgment.

Multiplicity

The multiplicity of selves is implied because the content of these three aspects may vary depending on who the other person is. Cooley (1902) acknowledged that the personality takes form based on imaginations of our self in other minds; and that we learn “to be different things to different people” (p. 165).

Renewal and Plasticity

A current project or purpose may animate and define the self; on completion or failure, however, the self must cut loose, “renewing its skin like the snake”; the self’s “rigidity must be broken up by growth and renewal,” “it must be more or less decisively ‘born again’”—thus a “healthy self must be both vigorous and plastic” (Cooley, 1902, p. 157). Cooley recommended that (some) impressibility and receptivity be retained in a character, making it open to learning and growth. “In character, as in every phase of life, health requires a just union of stability with plasticity” (p. 176). In fact, it is a proud man who “is not *immediately* dependent upon what others think” (p. 201); such pride could be considered a strength but in the long term “stunts a man’s growth by closing his mind to progressive influences” (p. 202).

Larger Conception of Self

A larger conception of the self is one that is liberated from the “passions of the lower self” such as “sensual needs and worldly ambitions” and is “joyful, boundless, and without remorse” (Cooley, 1902, p. 227).

Susan Harter’s Theory

Self as a Cognitive and Social Construction

The legacies of James and Cooley have survived into Harter’s (e.g., 2006) contemporary theory which incorporates key elements from their perspectives. Therefore, the pivotal tenet of her theory is that the self is both a cognitive and a social construction. The word “construction”

implies agency and allows the possibility of modifiability. The qualifier “cognitive” brings to the fore the role of the I-self as the architect of the me-selves; the qualifier “social” recognizes the substantial contributory role of (significant) others in our self-representations. Harter, (also) using cognitive-developmental and neo-Piagetian perspectives, has described how the person’s theory of self reflects the strengths and limitations of a particular cognitive-developmental stage/mini-stage. Across childhood and adolescence, there is an increase in differentiation (e.g., multiplicity) and integration of the self (e.g., coming to meaningful terms with contradictory selves). Likewise, using symbolic interaction theory (which includes Cooley’s looking-glass self) and attachment theory, she has explained the role of parents, teachers, and peers in influencing the content and favorability of self-representations.

Attributes as a Construction, Role of Others, and Variability

Harter (2006) has drawn attention to the salience of attributes⁴ like extrovert, talkative, cheerful, irresponsible, worrying, intelligent, and so on in the self-portrayals of adolescents. Given that the self is a construction, we may deduce that these and other attributes are a *construction*. Contradictions/variability and the role of others are also readily apparent in these self-representations. For example, she has illustrated how an adolescent described herself as cheerful when with friends (who she thought saw her as awesome), and mad and sad when around parents (who had told her that she was lazy and irresponsible). In line with James’s theory (from early adolescence), there is a “proliferation of selves that vary as a function of the social context” (Harter, 2006, p. 531). The construction of multiple selves varying across different roles and relationships is a critical developmental task in adolescence, aided by cognitive *and* social processes. Harter has reported a 25–30 % overlap in self-attributes across different social contexts

⁴ Called traits in personality research.

in early adolescence which drops to 10 % in late adolescence.

Self-Descriptions and Self-Evaluations

Continuing in James's tradition (i.e., self as multidimensional), self-representations include both self-descriptions and self-evaluations (Harter, 2006). There are two types of self-evaluations: (a) domain-specific (i.e., the self-concept) and (b) global (i.e., the self-esteem). The domains of self-evaluation change as well as increase in number from childhood to adulthood. For example, Harter (2012) has identified domains of self-evaluation for early childhood, middle-to-late childhood, adolescence, college years, early/middle adulthood, and late adulthood. Examples of the five domains in middle-to-late childhood include scholastic competence, physical appearance, and social competence. Examples of the 13 domains in late adulthood include cognitive abilities, job competence, family relationships, health status, life satisfaction, and reminiscence. The self-evaluations are weighted by the salience of particular domains to the person.

Global self-evaluation (i.e., the self-esteem or self-worth) is the overall judgment of one's worth: in Harter's conceptualization, this is not an average across specific domains of self-evaluation. In respecting that from middle school years onward, individuals report experiencing different levels of overall self-worth in regard to different relational contexts, Harter has also proposed relational self-esteem as a construct. My overall liking for myself can thus vary depending on the relational context (e.g., parents, friends at work, friends in the neighborhood).

Mutability of the Self

Using research investigating the stability or malleability of self-esteem, Harter has clarified her stance that self-esteem itself is neither a trait nor a state. In relation to their self-esteem, some individuals behave in a trait-like manner (i.e., show stability); others behave in a state-like manner (i.e., show contextual and temporal lability). She has concluded that "trait and state

attributions lie in individuals, not in the constructs themselves" (Harter, 2006, p. 554).

Hubert Hermans' Dialogical Self Theory

Decentralized Multiple I-Positions, Each with its Own Voice

The central premise of Hubert Hermans' dialogical self theory is that the self is constructed and represented through multivoiced, internal and external dialogues (e.g., Hermans, 2001). In other words, the internal dialogue is constituted of multiple voices because there are many autonomous "I-selves" or rather "I-positions" (e.g., I as a writer, I as a daughter, I as a learner), each with dominion over its multiple me-selves. Likewise, the external dialogue also comprises multiple voices because we live in a society populated by many others (e.g., my workmates, my sister). Hermans (a Netherlander) draws his inspiration from the American psychologist, William James (e.g., the "I-me" distinction); and the Russian literary scholar, Bakhtin (e.g., polyphony in literature). In integrating Bakhtin's notion of multivoicedness into a theory of I-self and me-selves, the outcome is a self characterized by "a decentralized plurality of characters" (Hermans, 2001, p. 248). That is, the central, coordinating, "authoritarian" "I-self" is replaced by a multiplicity of varied, even contradictory "I-positions," each with its own voice.

The voices function like interacting characters in a story, involved in a process of question and answer, agreement and disagreement. Each of them has a story to tell about his or her own experiences from his or her own stance. As different voices, these characters exchange information about their respective *Me's*, resulting in a complex, narratively structured self. (Hermans, 2001, p. 248)

Continuity and Discontinuity

Hermans (2001) has uniquely combined continuity and discontinuity in the dialogical self. From the Jamesian perspective, the continuity of

experience of *my* mother, *my* employer, and *my* friends emerges out of the common “my and mine”; in comparison, from a Bakhtian-derived perspective, *my mother*, *my employer*, and *my friends* reflect varied and possibly contrasting voices in the self-space which draw attention to discontinuity (Hermans, 2001). “In this conception the existence of unity in the self, as closely related to continuity, does not contradict the existence of multiplicity, as closely related to discontinuity” (Hermans, 2001, p. 248).

Positioning in Time and Space

Unlike the Cartesian rationalistic self *Cogito, ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”) (Hermans & Kempen, 1993, p. 1), “the dialogical self is always tied to a particular position in space and time” (Hermans, 2001, p. 249). “The *I* in the one position, moreover, can agree, disagree, understand, misunderstand, oppose, contradict, question, challenge and even ridicule the *I* in another position” (Hermans, 2001, p. 249). These I-positions are social because another person (whether real, imaginary, or a combination) is incorporated into a position which allows an alternative perspective on who one is (Hermans, 2001). In this regard, it is important to consider Hermans’ distinction between internal I-positions (experienced as part of myself) and external I-positions (experienced as part of the environment). Each derives its relevance from the other: for example, the internal position of “I as a teacher” is relevant because of the external positions of “my students”; likewise, “my students” are important to “I as a teacher.” Moreover, “internal and external positions meet in processes of negotiation, cooperation, opposition, conflict, agreement and disagreement” (p. 153) both intrapersonally (internal dialogue) and interpersonally (external dialogue).

McIlveen and Patton (2007) have indicated the usefulness of dialogical self theory for the career development literature. They recommend that the life themes component of Savickas’s career construction theory can especially benefit from the application of dialogical self theory.

Conclusion and Reflections

The literature on the self is quite prolific; the samples presented here are illustrative. Among the many other examples, career service professionals may be familiar with Donald Super’s (e.g., 1990) early interest in role self-concepts and the more recent narrative, constructivist movement in career counseling (McIlveen & Patton, 2007; Savickas, 2002; Watson & McMahon, 2014, Chap. 35). The multiple indigenous Western views on the self, presented in this section, offer career service professionals novel points for reflection, especially when these views are juxtaposed with perspectives on the personality presented in the earlier section.

Same Person, Different Conclusions

Whether we consider the personality or the self, ultimately we are talking of the same person. Yet depending on our frame of reference, we appear to reach somewhat different conclusions about the same person. It seems that self theorists especially draw attention to the plurality of who the person is, and (interrelatedly) are more open to the possibility of change. This is an overall slant that one can perceive; it does not indicate that there is unanimity in the self literature. For example, even Swann, whose self-verification theory explains stability of self-views (e.g., Swann & Pelham, 2002), does not rule out the possibility of change. In light of the finding that those with negative self-views have a reduced quality of life, he presses for the need to develop strategic ways to improve negative self-views (e.g., Swann, Chang-Schneider, & McClarty, 2007). He has also recently advanced the notion of the self as “functional fiction” (Swann & Buhrmester, 2012). The adjective *functional* serves to remind us that the coherent, stable presence of a made-up self facilitates the pragmatics of daily living; the noun *fiction* (as I see it) quashes the finality with which some scholars may be inclined to view the person.

The Importance of a Theory

No doubt a scientific theory is important. It provides direction to the field—influencing the

type of questions to be asked, the methods to be used, the manner of interpretation, and the orientation in the conclusions (Kuhn, 1970). Theory-building is not restricted to scientists; and if a scientific theory can direct the activities of scientists and the outcomes thereof, so will a person's (explicit or implicit) theory about their self direct their activities and outcomes. Whether a person experiences change or not, then depends on that person's (albeit implicit) theory of self. Carol Dweck's work in this area is particularly noteworthy. People hold either an "entity theory" (fixed attributes—a structure that one possesses which one can do nothing about) or an "incremental theory" (malleable attributes—that can be bettered through efforts) about one or more of their personal qualities (e.g., intelligence, math ability, verbal ability, personality) which has "profound consequences" (p. 124) for quality of self-regulation, actions, and outcomes (Dweck & Molden, 2005). Failure can be interpreted as indicating inherent inadequacy leading to a withdrawal of effort and poor outcomes (entity theorists); or failure can be understood as reflecting insufficient or inefficient efforts, making it more likely that efforts are pumped up, leading to enhanced outcomes (incremental theorists) (Dweck & Molden, 2005). Children and adults holding an entity theory versus an incremental theory have been found to be equally well-represented in research in the United States. As for whether an incremental theory is right or wrong, there are two things to note: (a) Accuracy of cognitions or metacognitions used in self-regulation is not quite the issue so long as these enhance rather than debilitate performance (e.g., Ferrari & Sternberg, 1998; Swann & Buhrmester, 2012); and (b) "evidence increasingly suggests that important parts of many abilities can be acquired" (Dweck & Molden, 2005, p. 123).

Personality and Self: Indigenous Eastern Perspectives Drawn from Philosophical Psychology

Psychology in modern India has been largely based on Western theory and research and

cannot be used (yet) to illustrate Eastern thought. Yang (2012) has adapted Wallerstein's world-system theory to propose that akin to a Western-hegemonized world-economy, there is a Western-hegemonized world-system for (academic) psychology such that "local psychologists in almost all major non-Western societies have developed the same kind of artificially transplanted psychology" (p. 9); that is, they have copied Western Indigenous Psychology (i.e., an imposed-etic psychology) despite being situated in culturally distinct non-Western contexts.

Therefore, in this section, Indian philosophy and spirituality (i.e., Vedic scripture-based literature) are used to illustrate Eastern perspectives. This fits with Yang's (2012) notion of *philosophical* psychology (which he has distinguished from *folk* psychology and *scientific* psychology). He has defined philosophical psychology as "the formal systems of psychological thought proposed by a society's philosophers" (p. 3) comprising a cultural group's knowledge-heritage.

Selection of Advaita Philosophy

There are six main orthodox schools of philosophical thought in India of which the Vedānta is one (Paranjpe, 1988). The literature selected for this section (e.g., Nisargadatta Maharaj, and the Bhagwad Geeta) represents the nondualist (*Advaita*) position in Vedānta. Whereas, the origin of these ideas is traced to approximately 2000–600 BC and the influential reinterpretations of Śaṅkara (or Śaṅkarācārya) in the 8th/9th century AD (Paranjpe, 1988), the interpretive lens used in this chapter is that of contemporary Indian scholars/philosophers (i.e., of the 20th century). Paranjpe's assertion that the Vedānta satisfies the criteria for a formal theory of personality (i.e., it is explicit, comprehensive, organized, thorough, open to experiential verification/empirical testing, and both abstract and applied) lends further credibility to the selection of resources for this section.

Introduction

In Advaita philosophy, there are explicit and carefully articulated notions of the self and personality (as also of emotional competence). The aim, however, is not to merely describe nor to only classify. Unlike the realist personality psychologists, the aim is neither to explain behavior as a representation of a stable internal structure nor to predict behavior based on indirect assessments of this supposed internal structure. In fact, there are many points of departure between Western psychology and Indian philosophy/spirituality with regard to notions of self, personality, and emotional competence. The distinguishing features of Indian thought (drawn from selected Indian philosophical psychology) are:

- Spiritual or a metaphysical/incorporeal orientation
- Fundamental difference in answering the question of “Who am I?”
- Transcendence as a key theme
- Malleability
- Complex notions of agency
- Hierarchically ordered classification allowing movement on a spiritual path
- Doctrine of oneness

Moreover, these features are necessarily overlapped and circular. Logically interconnected, one premise leads to the next. Therefore, in more ways than one, the approach is holistic. In the subsections that follow, indigenous Indian thought on self and personality is illustrated. Career service professionals can make an attempt to consider the many differences between indigenous Western and Eastern perspectives.

Position Articulated in J. Krishnamurti's Discourses

To know oneself, be an observer in the present and not a recorder replaying images of the past. “So the mind must be in a constant state of learning, therefore always in the active present, always fresh; not stale with the accumulated knowledge of yesterday” (Krishnamurti, 1972,

p. 15). If one looks at oneself (or for that matter at another) with “I know,” the images of the past overlay and obstruct any viewing of the self (or another) in the ever-evolving present. “To learn about myself there must be freedom to look and this freedom to look is denied when I look through the knowledge of yesterday” (Krishnamurti, 1972, p. 15). In fact, Bierman's (1990) research with rejected children in the United States supports such a claim: rejected children continued to be viewed negatively by their peers despite improvements in their behaviors. And so Krishnamurti's (1972) radical statement: “I know merely the images; a living thing I cannot know—dead images are what I know” (p. 32).

Implicit in Krishnamurti's notions of the self is transcendence of the past; the idea of the self in the here-and-now is explicit. Relating to oneself with vitality, relating to others (and more generally life) with vitality, are founded in awareness in the present. Liberating the present from the past and locating the self in the here-and-now are repeated motifs in Eastern thought (e.g., Thich Nhat Hanh's “Miracle of Mindfulness” [1999]).

Position Articulated in Nisargadatta Maharaj's Discourses

Nisargadatta Maharaj's emphatic and provocative statements once again illustrate the Indian (philosophical/spiritual) position on the self and personality. “How does personality come into being? By memory. By identifying the present with the past and projecting it into the future. Think of yourself as momentary, without past and future and your personality dissolves.” (Nisargadatta, 1973/1997, p. 206) Overdependence on space and time along with the facility of memory allows for a stable or enduring imagination of self. However, he has reminded us that space and time “are modes of perception, but they are not the only ones” (p. 205).

In notions of the self, he has contrasted personal with impersonal, particular with universal, experiencing with being, “*what* I am” with “*who* I am,” “I am this” with “I am.” Personality is a

result of identifying the self with the personal and the particular, with experiencing, with “*what* I am,” and concluding “I am this.” But that is not all that self is. An alternative is to recognize the self as impersonal, universal, located in “to be” and therefore in “I am”—an “I am” complete in and of itself without any need for qualifying further.

In fact, in his view all intrapsychic conflict is an outcome of identifying the self with time and space, with the mind and the body. “You have enclosed yourself in space and time, squeezed yourself into the span of a lifetime and the volume of a body and thus created innumerable conflicts” (Nisargadatta, 1973/1997, p. 204). “All your problems arise because you have defined and therefore limited yourself. When you do not think yourself to be this or that, all conflict ceases.” (p. 204)

Which is real, which is illusory? The transcendental, unlimited being is real; the person with limitations is illusory. “The ‘I am’ is certain. The ‘I am this’ is not.” (Nisargadatta, 1973/1997, p. 70) “The impersonal is real, the personal appears and disappears. ‘I am’ is the impersonal Being. ‘I am this’ is the person. The person is relative and the pure Being—fundamental.” (p. 71) Using an analogy, he has clarified, “(t)he person merely appears to be, like the space within the pot appears to have the shape and volume and smell of the pot” (p. 204). Audaciously, he has declared: “Fight with all the strength at your disposal against the idea that you are nameable and describable. You are not. Refuse to think of yourself in terms of this or that” (p. 204).

Transcendence is a key theme in Nisargadatta’s discourses on the self. To go beyond “I am this or that” is not to move towards vagueness, the apathetically inarticulate, or the lazily undifferentiated. Instead, the boundaries through which we define ourselves have to be surrendered to pure awareness, an awareness that yields oneness and a powerful love-of-all.

Stop imagining yourself being or doing this or that and the realization that you are the source and heart of all will dawn upon you. With this will come great love which is not choice or predilection, nor attachment, but a power which makes all things

love-worthy and lovable. (Nisargadatta, 1973/1997, p. 3)

General Position Articulated in the *Bhagawad Geeta*

In the Bhagawad Geeta (considered as much a philosophical treatise as a religious text), in understanding the self, attention is drawn to the metaphysical or incorporeal Self⁵; therefore, reflection on “who am I?” yields spiritually oriented expansive answers. Further, it is clear that one has a choice. A person can identify with his/her limiting attachments, which include notions of self as the particular (Chinmayananda, 2011). The optimal goal, on the other hand, is to transcend limited views of the self through contemplation and realize that one’s nature is Pure Being (Chinmayananda, 2011). Clearly, when the vocabulary goes beyond the self to include the Self, transcendence becomes a necessary corollary.

In articulating such transcendence, the doctrine of oneness is unequivocally presented in the Bhagawad Geeta:

- “With the mind harmonised. . .he sees the Self abiding in all beings, and all beings in the Self; he sees the same everywhere.” (VI/29,⁶ p. 451)

Moreover, this Self is simultaneously the one God. Therefore, the Bhagawad Geeta, written as a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna, a mighty warrior king, is a philosophical discourse urging engagement in the battlefield of life through realization of the supreme Self. Lord Krishna in the Geeta has stated:

- “He who see Me everywhere, and sees everything in Me, he never gets separated from Me, nor do I get separated from him.” (VI/30, p. 452)

⁵The capitalization of “Self” is deliberate and communicates the distinction between the personal self and the impersonal Self.

⁶Chapter number and verse number; verse translated from Sanskrit. Page numbers are from Chinmayananda (2011).

- “I am the Self...seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the Beginning, the Middle and also the End of all beings.” (X/20, p. 702)

Specific Position Articulated in the Bhagawad Geeta: The Theory of the Gunas

More specifically, the position in the Bhagawad Geeta with regard to the self and personality is clarified through the theory of the gunas. The gunas yield a typology: there are three types of gunas, namely *sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic*. Therefore, on the face of it, we can talk of three types of individuals or three types of personalities (see Table 8.1).

So far, one may wonder whether the gunas merely produce another interesting classification of individuals; if so, what value do they add? After all, there are many such classifications available already in the Western literature. However, there are many differences between gunas and personality typologies in the Western literature.

Hierarchy

As is clear from Table 8.1, the three personality types are in a hierarchical relationship with each other: at the lower level is the Tamasic person whose orientation to life is characterized by indolence, ignorance, and carelessness. At the middle level is the Rajasic person whose over-ardent egotistical actions create a restless, not-yet-satisfied, agitated, and fatiguing orientation. At the higher level is the Sattvic person who exemplifies temperance. Engaged in balanced activity without expectation of reward or reciprocity, rational, and discriminative, such a person achieves both happiness and knowledge.

Mutability

A pivotal distinction between Western and Eastern thought on personality is that mutability of personality is fundamental in Eastern thought and at best debated in Western thought. In order to understand the mutability of gunas, it is

essential to ask: What are gunas? The Sanskrit word “guna” can mean the property, quality, virtue, or distinguishing feature of an object. Swami Chinmayananda (2011) has explained the use of “guna” in the Geeta in various ways. A person’s psychological being can take on a Tamasic quality, for example. However, a guna is not an ordained quality of a person. It is not a fixed or inherent property of a person. Depending upon the person’s attitudes and actions, a guna can become predominant in a person and therefore, for the duration of that prominence, define the person’s qualities or virtues. In other words, the person is not a victim of his/her prominent guna; the person is responsible for cultivating a particular guna. When a person continues to foster a particular guna, his/her psychological being becomes enthralled by that guna. For instance, repeated inaction, living life without thought to consequence, without defining a deeper purpose in life, invite a Tamasic orientation to one’s psychological being. Therefore, Chinmayananda has described a guna as an attitude cultivated by a person—an attitude reflected in the manner in which a person’s mind functions. Each of the three gunas is akin, he has explained, to one of “three different climatic conditions” (p. 941) that can prevail in our psychological being. The differences in climatic conditions arise from and strengthen a particular orientation to life.

Moreover, no person is exempt from any of the three gunas. All three gunas are present in each person; individuality is manifest through the varying proportions of each of the three gunas. So also, is the personality defined. Thus, Chinmayananda (2011) has stated, “hence the distinct aroma in the character, conduct and behaviour of each individual” (p. 941). By now the mutability of the guna-made personality must be self-evident. As a guna is harbored and not predetermined or preformed, it is vulnerable to change. The stability of a guna-made personality is a function of what mental climate a person continues to harbor. Of course, in Indian thought, such a mental climate and therefore the personality can extend through a lifetime and even beyond a lifetime: on rebirth, a person can continue to be stuck in the same psychological

Table 8.1 Personality typology using the three gunas

	The Sattvic person: the pure	The Rajasic person: the passionate	The Tamasic person: the lethargic, ignorant
Characterized by	Purity and health; balanced joy	Passion and agitations	Inertia; sloth; absence of awareness (therefore, darkness); ignorance
Level of activity	Balanced activity	Over activity Over-fervent activities; feverish and ambitious activities	Inactivity/under-activity; lethargy; indolence Tendency to avoid responsibilities; perceived incapacity in practicing initiative; unenthusiastic; non-achieving
Intelligence	Rational and discriminative Ability to observe, analyze, comprehend, be aware of, and discern the outer world with accuracy	Creates mental agitations which make the intellect unsteady	Veils, distorts, and dishonors intelligence; reduced intelligence; makes it impossible to distinguish between right and wrong; misguided; destructive of discriminative judgment Miscalculates the world around him/her, misinterprets own potential, inaccurate in relating to the world. Perverted and false view of the world
Attachment to	Happiness and knowledge	Action	Lower nature through heedlessness, indolence, and lack of awareness
Brings to the forefront	“(D)ynamic quietude” (p. 974) Learning and knowledge	Greed, undertaking of numerous actions, restlessness, longing/insatiable desires; absence of quietude	Absence of awareness, sloth, carelessness, ignorance, and delusion
Nature of actions	Action without expectation of reciprocity or reward	Egotistical actions, expectation of reciprocity or reward	Careless, uncontrolled, irresponsible actions
In relation to own divinity	Of the three, “the most divine mental attitude, still it binds us and acts as a limitation on our divine nature” (p. 955)	Middle ground	Oblivious to higher calls within self; heedless of the more noble and divine life purposes

Note: This table has been created using Chinmayananda (2011)

conditions. Simultaneously, the facility of change is ever-available. All it takes is a change of mind, a new orientation.

The preeminent guna has a decided influence on intelligence. Consistency in rational and discriminative thinking and accurate discernment of the outer world is the outcome when the Sattvic guna is prominent. Agitations and inconsistency in quality of mental functioning are the result when the Rajasic guna overwhelms the other two gunas. Preponderance of the Tamasic guna results in reduced intelligence, and false,

perverted, and misguided perceptions. Clearly, therefore, in Indian thought intelligence is not fixed either. Intelligence is also mutable. It is a result of the quality of attitudes we nurture. In changing the quality of our attitudes, we can modify our intelligence.

Progression Within the Gunas

In order to achieve a better quality of life (and afterlife), a person is expected to exercise prudence and progress from cultivating predominantly lower to higher gunas. That is, if a

person has been harboring a Tamasic orientation, it is considered best that he/she works to alter the Tamasic orientation to Rajasic; similarly, a Rajasic orientation to Sattvic. Within the play of the three *gunas*, the ideal is the Sattvic orientation. This ideal, importantly, is not foreclosed to those who may not be living their lives currently through such an orientation. The Sattvic orientation is not the privilege of a few. Within the *gunas*, it is considered an optimal state that any and all *can* and *must* strive for. Thus, it is not just that the *gunas* are mutable. Transcendence of lower *gunas* is anticipated and valued.

Beyond the Gunas: Beyond the Mind, Beyond the Personality

Transcendence from lower to higher *gunas* is not the end of the story, so to speak. The exhortation is to transcend *all* *gunas*, including the Sattvic *guna*. This is reasonable given the ultimate goal, which is to transcend the mind, transcend the personality. Chinmayananda (2011) has explained, for example:

When anger conquers my mind, I experience and behave as an angry man; but when anger has receded and my mind is calmed, I can no longer continue to behave as a bad-tempered man. The tricks of the mind consist in projecting a world-of-Creation, thought by thought, and in feeling oneself irredeemably conditioned by one's imaginations. As long as one is drowned in the mind, ...storms... must necessarily toss one about. On transcending the mind, we realise the Self and its Infinite Nature. (p. 947)

He who has understood that he is not "the reflection in his own mind" but...something other than the mind and therefore something higher than the *gunas*—he is the one who has escaped forever the shackles of all limitations... (p. 981)

In explaining why one needs to unshackle oneself from the *gunas* and therefore from a particular personality, Lord Krishna in the Bhagawad Geeta has described the universe and its evolution. "... (T)he universe is evolved by the union between spirit and matter—Spirit enveloped in Matter is the pluralistic expression of Existence in the world" (Chinmayananda, 2011, p. 948). The *gunas* can also be likened to chords that bind Spirit to matter and entangle

the Spirit in matter. Through the play of the *gunas*, a person is "bound to the limitations and finitude of matter" (p. 954) and lives using dreamlike "projections of a delusory world-of-matter" (p. 953). Each of the *gunas* represents attachment to matter; the Indian ideal (as upheld in the Geeta) is to go beyond attachment.

A person with a Tamasic orientation is attached to the material world through heedlessness, indolence, and absence of awareness. He or she remains chained to the imaginations/delusions of the material world through slothful carelessness. A person with a predominantly Rajasic orientation is attached to the material world through action. Lost in doingness, and the arrogance of "I am the doer" (p. 959), such a person loses sight of a higher calling.

What may come as a surprise to some is that even a Sattvic orientation is to be transcended. This is because Sattwa also exemplifies identification with matter. A person with a Sattvic orientation is attached to the material world through attachment to happiness and knowledge. A person can be lost in the pleasures of goodness and therefore remain attached to matter: "A gold-chain, if sufficiently strong can also bind as any iron-chain. 'Goodness', though it gives us the freedom from all vulgarities, can also shackle us within its own limitations!" (Chinmayananda, 2011, pp. 955–956).

The *gunas* "bind us down to the lower plane of matter identifications, and therefore, to the ego-sense" (Chinmayananda, 2011, p. 946). Self-realization is the outcome of the transcendence of the three *gunas*. "When once we get away from the *gunas*..., we get redeemed from our limited sense of individuality, and instantaneously, we shall experience our Absolute Universal Nature" (p. 946). Thus, the Self-realized man/woman recognizes and acknowledges oneness: "He who has transcended the three *gunas* comes to experience the very plurality in the world as the play of the One Infinite (p. 1188)."

It is unmistakably lucid thus far that mutability and transcendence of self/personality/mind are *condiciones sine quibus non*; they are indispensable to Indian notions of "Who am I?" The

whole scheme collapses unless there exist mutability and transcendence.

Complex Notions of Agency: Choice and Surrender

Notions of agency are unremittingly complex in Indian thought. On the one hand, “I-ness,” “my-ness,” and “I am the doer” have to be set aside or surrendered to the realization that the one Supreme Self is the agent. Simultaneously, this realization itself is a choice that the person must exercise. To reiterate, it is up to the person to exercise agency in moving from a Tamasic orientation to a Rajasic orientation or to move beyond the *gunas* altogether. Yet the seeker is still lost to the material world unless he/she confronts, acknowledges, and surrenders agency to the one Self.

Note the following verse from the Geeta: “Thus, the ‘Wisdom’ which is a greater secret than all secrets, has been declared to you by Me; having reflected upon it fully, you now act as you choose” (XVIII/63, p. 1236).

Stated Utility of Knowledge of Gunas: Why Should One Know About Gunas?

The knowledge of *gunas* is provided so that it can be used as a self-monitoring aid as one journeys through life, or in Indian thought (if necessary) through lifetimes. Chinmayananda (2011) used an analogy of a person who were to drive a car (i.e., body and mind) on a long journey (i.e., life path): Knowledge of the engine (i.e., the *gunas*) can allow a person to make adjustments even when there is a breakdown and have a successful journey. He has clarified that knowledge of the *gunas* helps a person anticipate, comprehend, and manage “the possible mischiefs of the mind” (p. 944). Understanding the nature of the *gunas* and their tyranny—that is, the manner in which they can rule the mind—is prerequisite to gaining wisdom. “But in order to conquer the mind, a seeker must know very clearly the tricks by which the mind generally hoodwinks him... a thorough knowledge of the *gunas* will be helpful to everyone trying to master his own mind” (p. 947). Knowledge of the *gunas*, he has stated, provides us with “a charter of freedom, a scheme

for getting ourselves freed from the tentacles of our own imaginations” (p. 954).

That such knowledge is to be used solely for self-management and self-regulation, guiding self-development, has been clarified strongly: “Remember, and I repeat, REMEMBER, these classifications are given NOT TO CLASSIFY OTHERS but to provide us with a ready-reckoner to help us in our constant and daily self-analysis and self-discipline” (p. 1187; emphasis in original). Paranjpe (1988) has called it “a self-help program for those who aspire to higher levels of fulfillment” (p. 205).

Conclusions

It is not whether one agrees that there are *gunas*, or agrees about their assigned qualities. The point to take to heart is that our qualities, good or bad, serviceable or dysfunctional, are harbored choices. No one is more privileged than another with regard to personal qualities; no one is left out of the fold. Anyone can attain good qualities; anyone can attain the Self. There is no (unjust) Maker or genetic blueprint inflexibly bestowing more on one and less on the other.

Repeated Motifs

The Self as real and the need to return awareness to this *one* Self are repeated motifs throughout Advaita philosophy. Selected verses from Ādi Śaṅkarācārya’s *Aparokṣānūbhūti* (8th–9th century AD/2011) serve as additional examples:

- “I am not this body, the bundle of elements, nor am I the senses, I am something other than this.” (Verse 13, p. 12)
- “A heap of timber is considered as a house; a piece of steel is understood to be a sword, so too the Ātman⁷ is mistaken to be the body by the ignorant.” (Verse 74, p. 67)
- “Just as all things of large dimension and magnitude appear to be very small and

⁷ Ātman is the Supreme self, Pure Awareness or Consciousness.

insignificant due to great distances, so too does a person, on account of his spiritual ignorance, perceive the Ātman as the body.” (Verse 80, p. 70)

- “Thus when the Self is not known, the idea that I am the body, persists, when the Self is known, the same will dissolve in the Supreme Self.” (Verse 87, p. 75)

From a deeper level of transcognitive awareness, the phenomenal (or material) world (including limited notions of “I am this” or “I am that”) is considered illusory or arising from ignorance (i.e., in Sanskrit: *māyā*, *avidyā*) (Chinmayananda, 2011; Paranjpe, 1988; Śāṅkarācārya, 8th–9th century AD/2011). The plurality within and across objects/persons is part of the nature of the material world, also not characteristic of ultimate reality which is One. Consider the following, also from the Aparokṣānūbhūti: “At the very instant of the ignorance of the rope, it appears as a snake, so too, the pure and Changeless Consciousness Itself appears as the world of plurality because of ignorance” (Verse 44, p. 43). Of course, for all ordinary purposes, the phenomenal world is construed as real (Paranjpe, 1988); exclusive or even primary belief and attachment to the phenomenal or material world is in Indian thought always a misconstrual.

Further, the One or the Supreme Self is frequently referred to as *Brahman*, constituted of *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*, that is, Pure Being (without qualification)—Pure Awareness—Pure Bliss (Śāṅkarācārya, 8th–9th century AD/2012). Attachment and misconstrued beliefs in the material world explain human suffering; in contrast, bliss is the core of each being, experienced through Self-realization (Nisargadatta, 1973/1997; Paranjpe, 1988).

The three *gunas* are binding forces, attaching the unlimited being to the limitations of the world-of-matter. The *gunas* account for individual differences; albeit changeable differences (Chinmayananda, 2011; Paranjpe, 1988). Shifting one’s focus towards Brahman or the One Supreme Self or the single cosmic energy expressed as Being-Awareness-Bliss, requires

surrendering the variegated, multi-faceted individual self (Śāṅkarācārya, 8th–9th century AD/2012). Then, one is back to square One—or more appropriately, one circles back to One.

Points of Departure from Western Personality Theory

It is clear that in indigenous Indian thought (as illustrated in the selected resources used in this chapter), personality theory has been integrated with a metaphysical purpose in life, a larger purpose in life, or with spiritual goals in life. In such writing, it appears that life *is* about spiritual goals: all else is lack of awareness, a lack of wakefulness to one’s spirit. When spiritual goals are seen as the fulcrum of life and self-regulation, notions of self and personality can take on a different hue. Therefore the idea that in movement on a spiritual path, a personality may obstruct, or facilitate; but in either case, needs to be transcended.

Why does the personality need to be transcended? Caspi and Shiner (2006) have started their chapter on *Personality Development* with the following statement: “This chapter focuses on individual differences in personality, because differences among individuals are the most remarkable feature of human nature” (p. 300). Personality is essentially about individuality or individual differences. In Indian thought individuality is counter-opposed to Self-realization. In other words, the attainment of spiritual goals, the *raison d’être* of life, requires the relinquishing of false notions of individuality. The one Self and thus the doctrine of oneness, logically requires both a personality that can be changed *and* transcended. If we are all one, or are sourced from One, and I appear stressed at work today, I can change that and be calm tomorrow (or in the next instant). Also, as I grow in awareness and wakefulness, I realize my (one) Self. In this case, all apparent differences are as substantial or insubstantial as are shadows. Or in the words of Nisargadatta (1973/1997): “Just as each flower has its own colour, but all colours are caused by the same light” (p. 3).

In Indian thought, there are complex layers of being. The personality is integral to some but not all layers. And very importantly, a recurrent theme is that the personality or one's psychological being is the outcome of the mental climate that is cultivated. Choice and surrender are paradoxically coupled in resolving and evolving the unity of the Self from seeming plural differences.

Multiple Frames of Reference for Career Service Professionals: Sensitivity to the Universal and the Particular

So, who is the person? In this chapter, career service professionals were invited to examine their personal and professional orientations to the person, whose career development is their prime interest. It is possible that in the course of facilitating self-awareness, career exploration, career choice, or career transitions, a career service professional may operate from relatively fixed ideas about who is a person, and how open is the person's developmental trajectory. For example, the professional may believe in early formulations of the vocational personality with naught else thereafter, or at least no noteworthy novelties in later development (see Bakshi, 2014, Chap. 4). The overview of indigenous Western perspectives on the personality and those on the self, as well as the radically different indigenous Indian perspective, must convince career service professionals that there are multiple answers to the question, "Who is the person?"

The second point of reflection, given the volatility of lives, careers, and contexts, is to consider whether construals of the person favor adaptability. Thus it is relevant to ask: What are the varying points of view in the Western personality and self literatures with regard to the adaptability of the person; are the construals of the person angled towards positive development? What is the point of view in the Advaita position in Indian philosophical psychology? The Western personality literature is divided on its stance on modifiability of individuals, the Western self literature leans towards including modifiability,

and the Advaita position unequivocally is in support of modifiability or mutability. In fact, the Advaita position *rests on* modifiability or mutability. Explication of optimal goals in development and movement towards fulfillment are at times part of theoretical formulation about the person in Western personality or self literatures. In the Advaita position, they constitute the exclusive focal point: all efforts are centripetally (urged to be) directed towards this center. In turbulent times (e.g., Kotler & Caslione, 2009), which worldviews may enable resilience and positive development? At the level of the individual and that of a professional community, we have to reflect on our orientation to change/adaptability and the outcomes of such an orientation.

In presenting varied views on personality and self in this chapter, the intention has been to offer opportunities for reflection on contrasts and meeting-points within and across domains, within and across cultures. When there is knowledge of multiple points of view, one potential advantage is that one may be less likely to be bound only to one view, if not for one's own way-of-being, at least in relating to others whom we come across both personally and professionally. With globalization, internationalization, and cultural-diversification of most societies in the world, it is imperative that each of us broaden our outlook and hold plural frames of reference.

In the same vein, it is also timely to decolonize our minds. The economic and political colonization of regions of the world (e.g., India by the British) has been dismantled. Yet, in the dependence largely or solely on Western theory and research in academia and professional practice, the colonization of the mind and intellect has pervasively continued. It is time to liberate the mind and intellect from such hegemony. This is needed for both the Western and Eastern minds—for either to flourish. Diversity (as opposed to monopolization), after all, is not just a valued feature in an economy or in an ecosystem.

Exploration of ideas from multiple cultures promotes sensitivity to the particular, and sensitivity to the other. It helps us to become aware of

and to deconstruct ethnocentrism (see Leong & Pearce, 2014, Chap. 5). Simultaneously, despite the challenge of cultural relativism (in a cross-cultural dialogue) and the risks “of pleasing neither the traditionalist nor the modernist—neither the easterner nor the westerner,” such explorations are worthwhile “because, if successful, we may find something of truly panhuman and transhistorical significance” (Paranjpe, 1988, p. 186).

New Concepts and Viewpoints: Charting New Directions

In relation to the person, notions of permanence, transience, finality, transcendence, mutability, agency, individuality, and oneness (for example) have been redefined in this chapter using an Eastern lens. In the Eastern or Advaita view, the personality (or the construal of self as personal) is serviceable and tenable up to a certain point on a path defined (exclusively) by spiritual goals. Personality, self, and intelligence—central constructs in Western psychology—have been presented in a new light that is simultaneously age-old. It is hoped that the diversity represented in this chapter vitalizes new developments in the career services field. The disenchantment with “test and tell” approaches in career guidance (Zelloth, 2014, Chap. 15); the growing attention to systems and narrative approaches respectful of both human agency and contextual influences (e.g., McMahon, Watson, & Patton, 2014, Chap. 3; Watson & McMahon, 2014, Chap. 35); the gathering impetus in favor of indigenization of psychology (Leong & Pearce, 2014, Chap. 5); the reentry of spirituality into Western psychology (e.g., Oser, Scarlett, & Bucher, 2006); and amplified interest in positive psychology, positive development, and thereby notions such as generosity, contribution, transcendence (e.g., Lerner, Roeser, & Phelps, 2008; Proyer, Sidler, Weber, & Ruch, 2012) are a few examples of related new directions already palpable in the Western literature.

One of the recommendations ensuing from this chapter is to use multicultural teams: a confident person from a non-Western background

may bring in frames of reference that are not easily apprehensible to a Western researcher, theorist, or practitioner. Novelties and qualitative shifts that move a field ahead are brought about by those less tied to a paradigm or an ingrained way of thinking (Kuhn, 1970). Otherwise, anomalies may be invisible. Belief in the paradigm helps make it invulnerable to a precocious ending; at the same time, overly stable invulnerability chokes growth. There are times when it is best to move on, to break new ground. Now may be such a time.

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